

Mentoring New Pastors

Commission on Ministry

Presbytery of Eastern Virginia



Guidelines and suggestions

2013

Mentoring New Pastors¹

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia desires that all newly ordained teaching elders be equipped and supported by the presbytery so that their ministry and life outside the congregation will be as vibrant and Spirit-filled as possible. To this end, the Commission on Ministry has established a mentoring program for newly ordained teaching elders that is designed to offer mutual support, prayer and coaching, as well as collegial friendship in the first year of ministry.

Our denomination encourages mentoring of new teaching elders. One program offers the following guidance.

A mentor is a counselor, observing needs in participants and responding to those needs in a manner that fosters intellectual and spiritual growth.

- *A mentor keeps account, holding participants to standards and promises as a way of enabling them to transcend the walls of mediocrity and self-deception that rationalization erects.*
- *A mentor is a teacher, offering participants knowledge born both of study and of experience as they face the varied tasks, perplexities, and exigencies of ministry.*
- *A mentor is a model, embodying what it means to be a good and faithful pastor.*
- *A mentor is a friend, supporting, encouraging, enjoying and sacrificing for a sister or brother in Christ.*

Mentors work embodying in their own mutual friendship the graces, benefits, and challenges associated with pastors learning from and with each other how best to fulfill their calling as servants and apostles of Jesus. Their relationship furnishes an example to the rest of how the covenantal, corporate character of the pastoral vocation actually works itself out.

Spiritual Direction: Mentors serve as conveners and senior friends in ministry; they also function as spiritual leaders of the gathering, setting the tone for how the group becomes a community of mutual encouragement and spiritual discernment, while remaining diligently attentive to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in each member of the group, as well as in the group as a whole.

Spiritual direction means above all that we pray for and with one another. It entails that we pay close attention to the growth in Christian faith and ministry, and care enough about the other to urge them forward in spiritual growth and health. ²

¹ 2013

² From Company of New Pastors

Mentors Covenant:

- To meet with the new teaching elder at least 6 times over the first year.
- To utilize the basic outline and supplemental resources to help foster a supportive relationship with the new teaching elder.
- To be available for counsel and coaching as needed.
- To keep confidences and prove trustworthy.
- To communicate with COM at 6 month and 12 month point of mentorship.
- To offer to continue a collegial relationship with the new teaching elder after the yearlong mentoring is completed.

Mentee Covenant:

- To meet with the mentor at least 6 times over the first year.
- To set a high priority for this opportunity in one's schedule.
- To keep confidences and prove trustworthy.
- To offer to continue a collegial relationship after the yearlong mentoring is completed.

Reporting:

The mentor will report to COM at the six and twelve month points of the mentorship, briefly indicating the activity and frequency of get togethers and any highlights of the mentorship. The mentor will also share with COM any areas of strengths and/or struggles what may be relevant for COM to be aware of or assist with (without breaking confidences). The reporting guidance is left vague to allow mentor to share as much or as little as needed with the understanding that COM will follow up as needed. You may send printed reports to Linda at PEVA office for inclusion in COM monthly packet at Linda@pcusa-peva.org. Or contact the COM vice moderator for Support of Teaching Elders.

Basic Outline

Areas of sharing

- a. Family and personal vitality
- b. Celebrations and successes
- c. Struggles and challenges
- d. Guidance and coaching needs
- e. Education and long range plans
- f. Personal faith and spiritual formation
- g. Pastoral tasks and preaching
- h. Settling in and community resources
- i. Other

See COM Mentor Resource Packet for additional ideas and suggestions.